

Taking Care--Documenting the Occupational Culture of Home Care Workers
Archie Green Fellows Project, 2014-2015
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Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Terry Haydon interview, 2014-11-19 : interview conducted by Michael Robert
Bussel**

INTERVIEW LOG

00:00:30: Name is Terry Haydon. Lives in Corvallis, Oregon. Born in 1943 in Seattle, Washington.

00:01:10: Taught high school language arts and theater for 13 years. Sold insurance, moved to Oregon. Became medical transport driver. Met domestic partner and asked if he could become her caregiver. Has been full-time caregiver for last 14 years.

00:02:44: Always been a caring person. Got it from his mother. Natural fit to be a caregiver. Being live-in caregiver not for everyone. Down time away from home is limited.

00:04:20: Forces you to be focused and organized. Knew how to do this from previous jobs.

00:05:47: Must be caring person. Would “flag” a poor caregiver. Must be honest and sincere. Helps if you know how to organize your time. Has three good backup caregivers.

00:06:58: Initially against the union. Health insurance important. Became close friends with president of the union.

00:08:16: True caregiver thinks of client first. Can get worn down. Was in emergency room once for four days. Had good backup.

00:10:01: Introduced to caregiving through other caregiver. Mother raised three boys. Learned how to cook, sew, clean. Took classes in grooming. Yet to find poor curriculum or poor teaching. Home care commission training is top notch.

00:13:34: Talks about work day. Shower days are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Requires another person to help with shower. Stretches Becky’s muscles first. Bags have to be emptied several times during night and covered in shower. Tries to encourage Becky to do as much as she can. Check for bruises, scrapes, and sores. Need to be observant of client and surroundings. Dry and dress her. About a three-hour process. Then lunch. Becky plays solitaire, watches

television. Gets chores done then. Does computer work. Fixes dinner. Then gets rest after dinner. Transfer Becky from wheelchair to bed.

00:24:08: Every fourth day must change base. Knows how to do it, but doesn't like to. Catheter change must be done by home nurse. Tries to maintain routine. As artistic people, however, both fight routine. Importance of planning ahead.

00:27:48: Been on five cruises. Must plan way ahead. Wheelchair "died" on second day of cruise. Had folding wheelchair as backup. Have to be flexible when away from home and be prepared to improvise.

00:31:35: Must be observant, focused, aware of immediate surroundings. Power chair and gravel don't mix. Listen to sounds. Heightened awareness of need for both to listen.

00:34:37: At trainings, people bring up problems with clients and how to resolve them. Every caregiver and every client is different. Make profession unique. Gets questions from 24/7 caregivers. Knows caregiver whose mother will not let anyone else care for her. Home is workplace.

00:38:31: Families tend to be domineering. Conflict with caregivers. Relative caregiver may take advantage of non-relative caregiver. Cannot leave client alone or without immediate means of contact.

00:40:21: Wants Becky to wake up with smile on her face. Does something silly or stupid. One of my jobs. Many home care workers have sense of caring. If not, they are in the wrong business. Spontaneous use of humor. Without humor and ability to laugh at yourself, you will be hurting. Job will get to you.

00:43:00: Need to be a good listener, both caregivers and union organizers. Anticipate what people need. Learned when logging with his dad. Carried over to caregiving. Not everyone can do that.

00:45:57: Gratifying when you help someone stay in their home. Strong bond as domestic partners. 22-year age difference. Concerned what would happen if he passes away. No concern about being an advocate. 95 percent of time try to turn negative into positive.

00:49:12: Last trip misfortunes. Lift in van malfunctioned. Does a lot of traveling. Wants to make sure Becky gets to go on cruises and do things she wants to do.

00:51:45: Dad was mechanic, brother was mechanic, another brother an electrician. Dad improvised, jerry-rigged things. Took five years of wood shop in high school.

00:52:45: One of biggest things from union was health insurance.

00:54:24: Told legislators about insurance and importance of keeping people in their homes rather than in nursing homes. People no longer live from paycheck-to-paycheck. Union has brought wages up. People take on too many clients when wages are insufficient. Burn themselves out.

00:57:32: Drawbacks of being home care or personal support worker. Become attached to clients and workers devastated when client passes away.

00:58:56: Live-in home workers barred from having other clients. Hourly—can work with as many clients as you want but there is a limit to what a person can handle. Make sure workers are healthy. Union helps indirectly.

01:03:31: SEIU and other entities come up with ideas. Make sure that new folks coming in get what they need to be good workers.

01:02:06: Feminine side of home care. Believes that men get in touch with other part of themselves as men. Not that you become feminine as a man, but that you get in touch with your nurturing side. Boon if you are a nurturer.

01:03:58: Other SEIU members often have no idea what caregivers do. Tries to explain. Notes special needs that some people have. Diabetes care and nutrition courses offered.

01:06:56: Organize your life. Organize your time. Must plan ahead. Must scout out new places in terms of wheelchair passage.

01:08:18: Reads, likes to budget for activities.

01:12:20: Home care workers getting involved in other things is to everybody's advantage. Wears five different hats. Serves on home care commission training committee.

01:13:53: Need rapport with SPD (Seniors and People with Disabilities), case managers, clients. Important to know your managers. Turnover is problem in social services.

01:14:50: End of interview.